



Bonzo Beaver

Written by
ARTHUR CROWLEY

Illustrated by
ANNIE GUSMAN



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This is the day Bonzo Beaver has been waiting for! At last Mother says he's old enough to play all day with his big brother. But while Bonzo excitedly brushes his tooth and hurries through breakfast, Boo sulks. He won't have any fun if Bonzo tags along! Bonzo isn't strong enough to climb Mr. Baker's wall — he can't even reach a peach from the branches of the fruit tree. So what good is a little brother?

In the face of Boo's taunts, Bonzo *has* to run away, even if it means straying onto the forbidden lawn of mean old Mrs. Grisley. But then both Beaver brothers are in for a surprise, for Mrs. Grisley knows a neat little trick perfectly suited to solve Bonzo's predicament. And that's how Boo finds out exactly what good *is* a little brother.

Arthur Crowley's jubilant verse and Annie Gusman's brilliant colors create a tale with just the right blend of warmth and hilarity. Every child who has ever felt too small to keep up with the bigger kids will cheer as Bonzo, with a little help from a new friend, proves it's not size but cleverness that counts in a pinch.

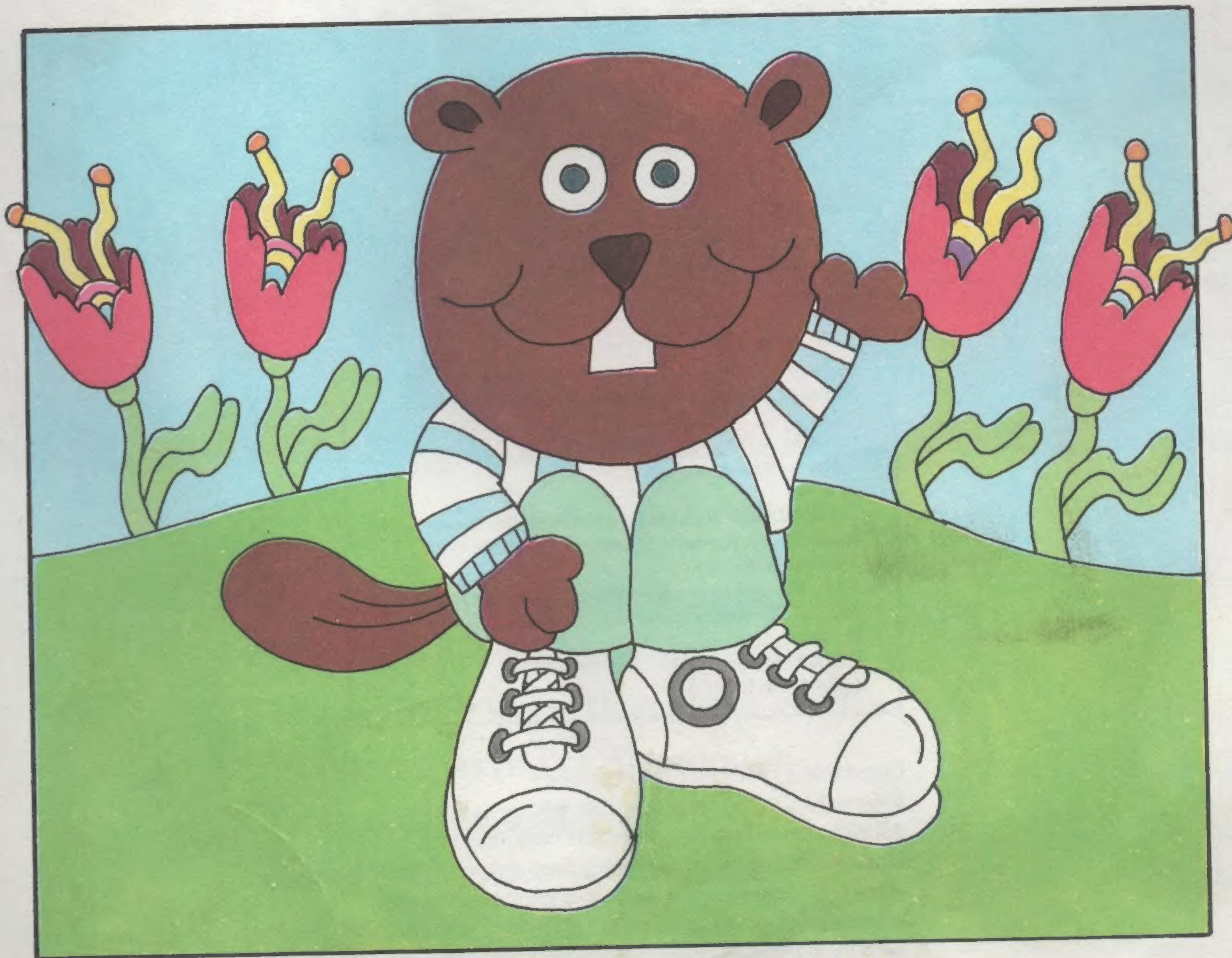
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Bonzo Beaver

Written by ARTHUR CROWLEY Illustrated by ANNIE GUSMAN



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SUMMARY: With the help of a neighbor, five-year-old Bonzo Beaver proves to his older brother that he is not a nuisance.

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Bonzo Beaver hopped from bed:
"This is a special day!" he said.
"Since I've been acting extra good,
My mama says I'm old enough
To go outside and play all day
Along with older brother, Boo,
And walk all through the neighborhood!"

So Bonzo brushed his only tooth
And tied his shoes all up in knots,
And then he ate a great big bowl
Of Super-Frosted Sucker Pops.

But Boo just sat there looking glum.
"If little brother comes along,
Well, how can I have any fun?
He's still a baby! Bonzo's dumb!
And he can't do the things I do.
He's just a little kid," said Boo.



But Mother Beaver shook her head.
"You know that isn't fair," she said.
"I think you should remember, Boo,
That you were five years old once, too.
And even if he's young and small,
He's still your brother, after all.
Remember when I taught you how
To get the bark out of your teeth?
And when to slap your tail and swim?
You're oldest, and it's your turn now.
I want you to look after him."



The Beavers walked around the block,
And Boo said, "This is just my luck!
Now I'm supposed to be your mother
And baby sitter too! I'm stuck!
And what good is a little brother?"

They went down by the big fruit tree,
And Boo looked up and picked a peach.
Then Bonzo stretched high as he could.
"But, Boo!" he said. "I just can't reach!"

"Too bad," said Boo. "They taste so good.
Too bad," said Boo, "that you're so SMALL.
Too bad that you're not TALL like me."



"Let's take a short cut here," said Boo,
"And climb up Mr. Baker's wall.
He doesn't mind if we cut through."

But Bonzo said, "What if I fall?
And I don't think I'm strong enough
To climb up there." Boo said, "That's tough!
I guess you'll have to walk around.
Too bad. That way is so much longer.
Too bad you're not a little STRONGER."

Poor little Bonzo Beaver shrugged.
His Beaver tail dragged in the mud.
He walked what seemed to be for miles
And found his brother Boo all smiles.

Boo said, "You made it here at last!
I got here quite some time ago.
You take all day," said Boo. "Let's go!"
"But, Boo! I just can't walk that fast!"
"*Too bad,*" said Boo, "that you're so SLOW."



"Stay on the sidewalk here," said Boo.

"This is Mrs. Grisley's lawn;
It's the only one you can't walk on,
'Cause she starts yelling if you do."

So neither Beaver made a sound.
They climbed the hill and tiptoed down.

"You're starting school next year," said Boo.

"And here's the one that you'll go to:
Bink Beaver Elementary.

They named it for our Uncle Bink.

He built the local dam, I think.

You'll be down in the baby pen,
Just playing with your baby toys,
While *I'll* be up in number 10
With all the *older* girls and boys."



"Too bad," said Boo, "that you're so YOUNG.
Too bad," said Boo, "that you're so DUMB.
Too bad you're not GROWN UP like me."
He looked around: NO BONZO B!

"My gosh!" said Boo. "He's run away!
My gosh! My little brother's gone!
My gosh! Now what will Mother say?
He ran through Mrs. Grisley's lawn!"



"Who's out there?" Mrs. Grisley said.

"I see you and I've got my stick!

I don't know why you keep on trying!

You'll never get away with it!"

She poked around behind a tree

And found a baby Beaver crying.

"Oh, please don't be afraid of me

For yelling," Mrs. Grisley said.

"It's really all I ever do

To keep kids off my flower bed."

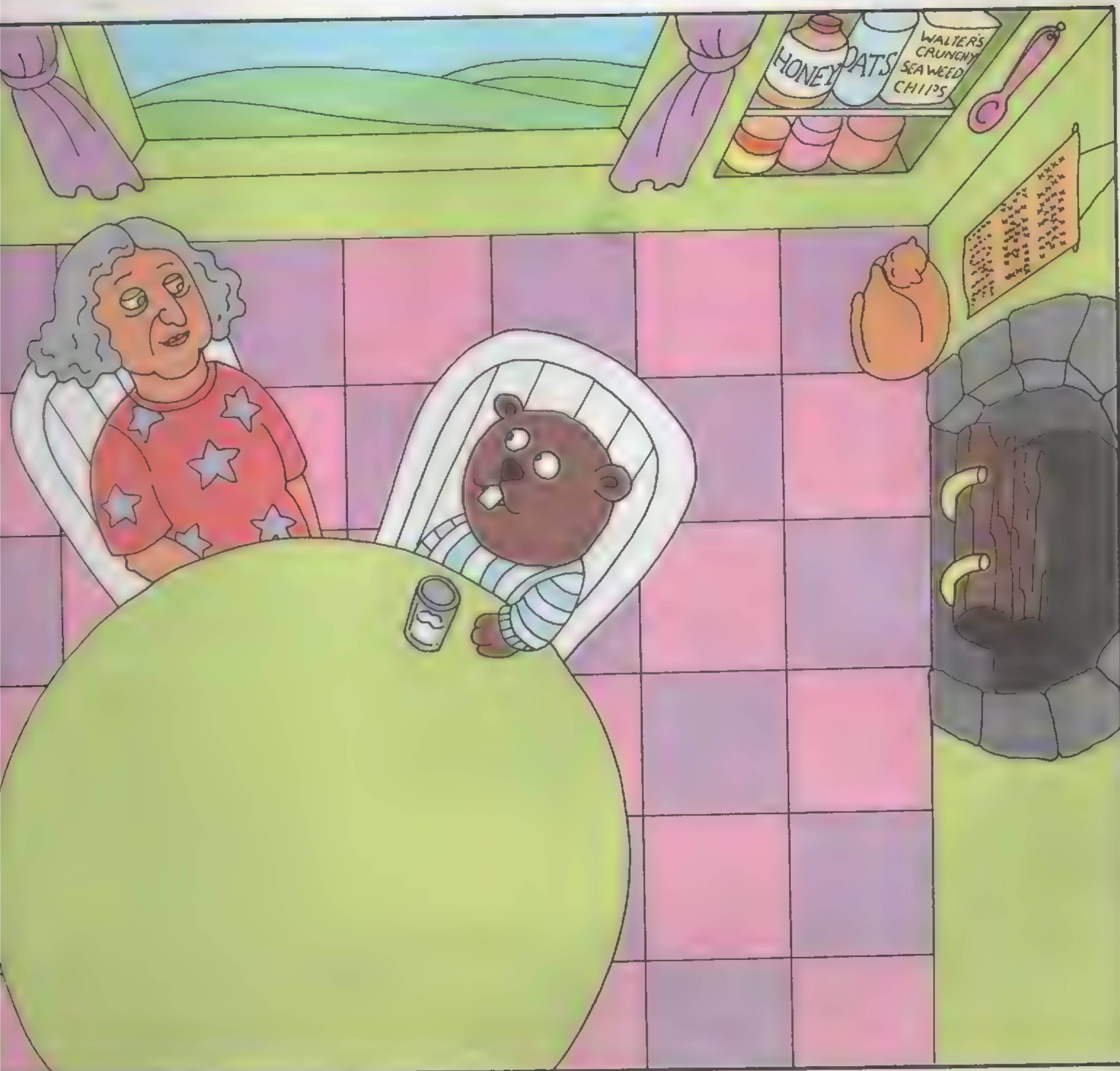


Then both of them went up the steps
And into Mrs. Grisley's kitchen.
Bonzo got a glass of milk,
And Mrs. Grisley sat and listened:
"Now tell about your brother, Boo,
And all those things he said to you."

"Boo called me *baby, dumb, and slow*.
And told me how much I don't know.
I didn't think he'd feel that way,
And I just *had* to run away!"

Mrs. Grisley sat and thought:
"Boo has a lesson to be taught.
Between us, I believe we can.
Now listen, Bonzo. Here's my plan."

She told him just what he should do.
Then Bonzo went to look for Boo.



He found his brother out of breath.
"I've looked *everywhere!*" said Boo.
"My gosh! You scared me half to death!"

And then Boo noticed something wrong:
"Hey, Bonzo! Just what's going on?
This is Mrs. Grisley's lawn!
And there she is!" he cried. "I see her!
Let's run or we're as good as dead!"



"Who's out there?" Mrs. Grisley said.
"I thought I saw two little Beavers!"

They put their Beaver tails down flat,
But Grisley caught them anyway:
"Oh, no you don't! I've got you trapped!
And you're not going to get away!"

"Oh, Mrs. Grisley, please!" Boo cried.
"I'm just a CHILD! Too young to die!
Just eight years old! And Bonzo's five!"



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Then little Bonzo spoke right out:
"I don't see what you're mad about!
This yard's a *mess!* It's a *disgrace!*
With sticks and tree limbs everyplace!
What I would do if I were you
Is find a Beaver, maybe two,
And let them clean it up for you.
The first thing Beavers learn to do
Is how to gather wood and chew.
And when they build their dam, then you'll
Have a pretty little wading pool!"

"A wading pool?" said Mrs. G.
"That never has occurred to me.
And I suppose you two could do it?"
"Of course!" said Bonzo. "Nothing to it!"



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Then Mrs. Grisley shook her head.
"I'll let you go this time," she said.
"But let me give you both a warning.
You'd better be here in the morning!"



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The Beavers started out for home.
Boo said, "Hey, Bonzo, that was slick!
I'm glad I wasn't all alone.
She would have got me with that stick.
The dam idea was quite a trick!
Now we can build one of our own.
And we'll have lots of fun!" said Boo.
"That's right," said Bonzo. "Me and you."



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Their mother asked, "How was your day?
Where did you go? What did you do?"
And Boo said, "Bonzo saved the day!"
And then he told her where they'd been
And all the trouble they'd been in.

"My baby brother's pretty SHARP.
He may be little, but he's SMART!
It won't be very long, you see,
Till he knows just as much as me!"

"My goodness!" Mrs. Beaver said.
"But, Bonzo! Weren't you scared a *bit*?"



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And Bonzo grinned at Boo and said,
"We Beaver brothers do okay.
I think whatever comes our way
Boo and I can handle it."

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Photograph: Bart McCarthy

Born in Dallas, Texas, ARTHUR McBLAIR CROWLEY received his B.A. from the University of Texas and his M.A. from the University of Missouri, where he was also awarded teaching certificates in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. A resident of Kansas City, Missouri, he has taught in Head Start programs in Kansas City, Kansas, for nine years.

ANNIE GUSMAN, who was born in New York, has also lived in Rhode Island, Missouri, and Paros (an island off the coast of Greece). A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, she now works as a freelance illustrator of books and other publications and lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Arthur Crowley and Annie Gusman are also the author and illustrator, respectively, of another highly successful book for children, *The Boogey Man*. Here are some typical comments about the book:

"This is one of those rare, spoofy trifles that keep soaring higher right till the end

— Kirkus

"Inventive, unselfconscious, and humorous."

— Starred review, *School Library Journal*



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